

LESSONS OF THE MOZAMBICAN REVOLUTION

by Joe Slovo

"Victory", said President Machel in a Message to the Armed Forces (Sept. 25 1974), "does not consist of hoisting a new flag or adopting a new anthem however beautiful they may be. Our victory will be meaningful only with the triumph of the interests of the working masses through the implementation of FRELIMO'S programme."

This commitment to real revolution is, in the case of FRELIMO, not just the rhetoric which we have heard in other places in the euphoric atmosphere of independence celebration. It is a commitment forged by the revolutionary processes of the past 16 years, nurtured by the leadership of FRELIMO, and matured out of the real practice of struggle. Its roots are today deeply embedded in Mozambican soil. There were, of course, specific factors which influenced the form and pace of FRELIMO's march to victory. But many lessons, of more general relevance, can be learnt from a study of the Mozambican revolutionary experience. In particular, it is instructive to reflect on the way in which

FRELIMO's ideology was forged within the framework of revolutionary science, how it confronted the reality of Mozambican conditions, how it recognised and met the contradictions within its ranks to emerge as an unchallengeable united force, and how it mobilised the national and regional energies of its diverse peoples to transcend the confines of tribalism, racialism and narrow nationalism. In the more recent period FRELIMO's new perspectives shed light on the complex problems facing those in Africa who aim to build foundations for the construction of socialism in a post-colonial situation which has left our continent with a legacy of underdevelopment at every level of its socio-economic structure.

FRELIMO'S 3 CONGRESSES

In the 16 years of its existence, FRELIMO has held 3 Congresses each representing a specific stage in the Mozambican revolution. In June 1962, FRELIMO was founded and, in September of the same year, held its first Congress. In the following two years conditions were prepared for the armed struggle which was launched on the 25th of September 1964. At its second Congress in July 1968, far-reaching guidelines were endorsed for the success of the armed struggle and for its transformation into a revolutionary People's War. New decisions were taken to clarify the aims of the National Democratic Revolution against the background of emerging contradictions within the popular anti-colonialist movement between those who defended the interests of the broad labouring masses and those who wanted to expel Portuguese colonialism so that they could themselves gain the fruits of the exploitation of the Mozambican people.

With the conquest of political independence, the essential objectives of the Democratic National Revolution had been attained and the conditions had been created to advance to the next stage — the stage of People's Democratic Revolution. At the 1977 third Congress historic decisions were taken to transform FRELIMO into a vanguard party basing itself primarily on the working class in alliance with the peasantry, supported by progressive elements of other labouring classes and groups. The Party, guided by the scientific ideology of the Proletariat — Marxism-Leninism — has, as its prime objective, the building of a Mozambique which is free of all forms of exploitation of man by man. In the words of the new programme:

“The path leading to such an objective includes various stages. The stage that in essence was successfully concluded after the conquest of National Independence, is the stage of the National Democratic Revolution. *Only after the construction of People’s Democracy will it be possible for the Mozambican labouring classes led by their vanguard Party, to pass to the following stage, that of the Socialist Revolution.*” (My emphasis)

The Party declares itself to be the leading force of the State and Mozambican society. The basis of its ideological and theoretical activities are the experiences of the Mozambican people and Marxism-Leninism. Its internal structures are guided by the principles of democratic centralism. Individual and collective discipline are central. Emphasis is laid on adherence to proletarian internationalism which is proclaimed an immutable principle and a constant of the struggle waged by the Party. In terms of the Statutes, membership of FRELIMO is restricted to those who live exclusively from the fruits of their work.

The new tasks which the Mozambican revolution has set itself can only be fully understood against the background of its past struggles and achievements. To grow from one stage to another higher one, is possible only if the right seeds were planted in the earlier seasons of struggle. Especially when the main immediate task is popular and national in character and serves the general interests of a wide range of class and social forces, a revolutionary movement must be on its guard against groups of aspirant exploiters who will try to stop the revolution at the point when they can become the main beneficiaries of the people’s sacrifices. The primary question facing all contemporary liberation movements, especially at the stage of the anti-colonial struggle, is how to resolve these inevitable contradictions without unduly narrowing the base which needs to be mobilised in support of immediate aims. It is FRELIMO’s special merit that it skilfully maintained a correct balance in this respect and was thus able to lay the basis for the inspiring perspectives adopted by its third Congress.

FRELIMO IS FORMED – THE FIGHT FOR UNITY

The task which faced the few revolutionaries who had banded together in 1962 to create a front for the liberation of Mozambique was indeed a formidable one. The new organisation had to be constructed from disparate groups operating mainly in exile, many of whose members were still influenced by tribalism and regionalism, without any common

strategic approach other than a broad opposition to Portuguese colonialism. Vital questions relating to the aims of the struggle or the true identity of the enemy had either not been defined in the old organisations or were answered in different ways. It is understandable, therefore, that in this early phase the unity which was established was both reluctant and fragile. FRELIMO records that this beginning of the new organisation was "marred by mutual recriminations, expulsion, withdrawal, as between exile politicians who refused to give up the dead futile infighting of an irrelevant brand of nationalist politics" (*Editorial Mozambique Revolution April-June 1972*).

A group of younger militants within the new organisation immediately set about the task of attempting to build a movement which was united in substance and not merely in form. Above all they began to elaborate an ideology and a programme of struggle without which unity is merely a cliché and has no real or effective meaning. Amongst these were outstanding militants who had already made Marxism-Leninism their ideological lodestar and who skilfully applied its principles to reflect the reality of the different stages of the Mozambican revolution.

In September 1962, within three months of FRELIMO's birth, a programme was elaborated, defining the struggle against imperialism, and underlining the broad strategy of people's struggle and national reconstruction. This programme served as a foundation stone for later ideological development. In the course of the following years FRELIMO moved inexorably from a concept of liberation struggle to a concept of bringing about a democratic revolution in Mozambique. Those who were unable to adjust to the needs of the developing revolution were rejected by it.

The decisive role in bringing the existing organisations together in 1962 was played by militants who had come from inside the country where they had been working in underground conditions. It was this same group which helped shape the developing revolutionary political line. Because their experiences were restricted to clandestine activities, they perhaps lacked the tradition of all-round organisation. But the amalgam of this group with those militants in the exile organisation who showed a capacity to last the revolutionary course, helped structure the political party at the time of FRELIMO's creation. At this stage, and until his assassination in 1969, the founding president of FRELIMO, Eduardo Mondlane, played a role which was of inestimable

importance. This initial act of unity of June 15th 1962, was only the beginning of a difficult and complex process. Local conditions determined the precise way in which FRELIMO resolved the contradiction between the need for the broadest possible alliance and the temptation of bringing this about at the expense of fundamental ideological principle. But the general lessons of the FRELIMO approach in this field have relevance beyond the purely local Mozambique experience. In the words of President Machel:

“ . . . actual practice has shown that unity based on the negation of the enemy and on just the demand for independence was not enough. It was essential that unity be achieved on the basis of a clear and unequivocal definition of the principles of what we want to do, how we want to do it, and what kind of society we want to build, and above all, the principles asserted must be lived by and developed through consistent practice.”

Attempts in Africa and elsewhere to build a unity based on purely formal expressions of togetherness or to impose a unity from outside without regard to the principles enunciated by Comrade Machel, have always had the effect of sabotaging and weakening the struggle against the main enemy.

THE ARMED STRUGGLE IS LAUNCHED

The dream which the founders of FRELIMO had in 1962 of a free Mozambique took 12 years to be translated into reality. But at that time “when FRELIMO was formed, the objective of uniting all Mozambicans and overthrowing the colonial fascist system seemed to many illusiory or utopian.” (Machel Message on the 10th anniversary of the start of the armed struggle: July – September 1974).

Although some preparations were made soon after the formation of FRELIMO (including the training of armed militants) it was only at the July 1964 meeting of FRELIMO’s Central Committee that a decision was taken to embark on a protracted armed struggle for the total liberation of Mozambique. In the two preceding years, FRELIMO, in a bid to achieve its aims by peaceful means if possible, made genuine attempts to negotiate with the Portuguese Government and to mount pressure through the United Nations. The decision to break with this policy was not taken lightly. In 1970 FRELIMO’s official organ (July – September 1970 no.44) discussed the problems that were taken into account before the grave and serious decision was taken to have re-

course to armed struggle as the only way forward.

Firstly, a decision had to be taken on whether the armed struggle was really the only way left open for the achievement of independence. We must remember that FRELIMO had before it at that point examples of several African colonies achieving independence through political and legal struggle which did not include the use of organised violence. *Secondly*, if the armed path was the only legitimate path open to the liberation movement in Mozambique, was it practical and was FRELIMO capable of embarking upon it? At that point FRELIMO had only about 200 trained comrades and a minimum of weaponry:

“Only a visionary could pretend that this force would have been able to defeat the powerful Portuguese army, which had stationed in Mozambique at that time 30,000 troops equipped with the most modern war material. On our side, there was also the problem of supplies, for those 200 fighters had a limited quantity of ammunition and it was not clear how it could be replenished in order to continue the war.”

Thirdly, FRELIMO had to take into account the psychological element which it regarded as no less important. It was aware that centuries of oppression and colonialist propaganda had conditioned the Mozambican people into harbouring a kind of religious fear of the Portuguese. And the ‘Mzungo’ was almost a god – untouchable, invulnerable. Thus without breaking down this feeling of impotence and inferiority the armed struggle was doomed to flounder.

Fourthly, the Mozambicans were still far from regarding themselves as one people and the level of national consciousness was extremely low. The enemy, as in all such situations, had encouraged ethnic divisions which had roots deep in the past and it stimulated and accentuated tribal consciousness.

“Like all imperialists, the Portuguese had followed the policy of ‘divide and rule’. The result was that individuals from different parts of Mozambique, speaking different languages, were suspicious of each other and sometimes quite hostile.”

But perhaps those who paint a gruesome picture of bloodthirsty motivation behind modern people’s armed struggle should be reminded that the factor which was uppermost in the minds of the leaders of FRELIMO in weighing the path of struggle to be followed, was the awareness of the suffering war would bring to the Mozambican people.

“Would armed struggle be worth the cost? Would it not be better to continue with the known evils of exploitation and oppression so as to avoid the horrors and uncertainties of war?”

The 1964 meeting answered all these questions in turn. Portuguese colonialism had made it abundantly clear that its colonies were constitutionally part of the metropolis and that the fascist regime would never allow the alienation of any part of the Portuguese territory. Its answer to FRELIMO was increased repression and it closed all possible avenues to radical change by methods which did not include organised violence. Thus whatever may have happened in other parts of Africa, in the case of Mozambique and the other Portuguese colonies there could be no question of any negotiated settlement with Salazar and Caetano-type regimes. In this connection it should also be remembered that the Portuguese economy itself was too weak and dependent upon its imperialist partners to favour the type of constitutional solution which had occurred in some parts of Africa where the imperialist masters voluntarily relaxed their direct political control in the expectation that their neo-colonial grip would be maintained through indigenous groups.

What then of the disparity of strength between Portuguese Colonialism and the people? FRELIMO was convinced that the initial numerical disproportion of forces in favour of the colonialists would in time be reversed with the integration of larger and larger numbers of the population into the struggle. By its very nature people's armed struggle always begins in a situation in which the enemy has overwhelming superiority in almost every department of military importance except the one which will eventually lead to its destruction, and that is its base amongst the masses. But of course as we well know the logistical problems cannot be ignored and FRELIMO was confident that the international context of their struggle would facilitate a solution.

“Independent African countries had promised their support to the liberation struggle in no uncertain terms at the recently created Organisation of African Unity. The socialist block was strong, and by the very nature of the policy of the socialist countries their support for our struggle was assured”.

FRELIMO was also convinced that once the armed struggle started the psychological factor would begin to operate in favour of the liberation movement and the myth of Portuguese invincibility would be exposed.

“It was necessary that our people should see the colonialists falling under the fire of our weapons, for then all the mental inhibitions created by previous oppression would begin to dissolve.”

Despite its awareness that a war would inevitably cause hardship and suffering the FRELIMO Central Committee was convinced that the people were ready to endure the cost of eradicating colonialism.

Once the decision had been taken the whole FRELIMO organisation was mobilised to prepare for armed struggle. The Department of Internal Organisation dedicated itself to mobilising the people internally and the Department of Defence began creating the necessary logistical and practical preconditions. On the 25th September 1964 the armed struggle was launched in Chai in Cabo Delgado province. It was quickly followed by operations in the other provinces of Zambezia and Niassa and Tete.

“Acting with flexibility, undertaking operations against targets far apart from each other, the first guerrilla units succeeded in frustrating the enemy’s plans for repression which had been laid out long before. It was these militants, badly-equipped, with a high sense of determination and patriotism, who created the conditions for the consolidation of the armed struggle . . . They (the Portuguese) were forced to concentrate their troops in a limited number of places in order to diminish their vulnerability; they abandoned the small isolated administrative posts; they reduced the circulation of vehicles on the mined roads where our fighters were active. In this way they lost control over increasingly large regions and consequently our fighters could circulate freely, openly contact the population and develop the organisation necessary to successful armed struggle.”
(Mozambique Revolution April–June 72, p. 14).

The dramatic measure of FRELIMO’S achievements in the following years was the fact that by 1968 it was able to hold its second congress inside the liberated territory of Mozambique. The enemy was powerless to prevent the congress or interfere with its proceedings despite the fact that two months before it was held, FRELIMO had announced it would take place.

In those four years of dedicated struggle FRELIMO’s guerrilla army increased from a few hundred to more than 10,000 fighters. The very success and development of the struggle had created conditions for the improvement in the supply of weaponry both through capture from the enemy and through the receipt of further and more sophisticated supplies from anti-imperialist states. The action of the guerrilla had once

and for all destroyed the myth in the minds of the Mozambican people that Portuguese colonialism was invincible. With each passing year it was the Portuguese soldiers who became increasingly fearful and demoralised, whilst the revolutionary action of FRELIMO was having the effect of welding the Mozambican people into a single unity in which tribal, ethnic and regional differences were being effectively undermined.

There is a dialectical logic in this. The enemy starts off all powerful because the people are powerless and are reluctant to risk their all until action convinces them that they must in the end triumph. Again, ethnic division is an obstacle to the successful launching of revolutionary struggle. Without roots amongst the people and mass contact with them, successful armed struggle is impossible. Yet without successful armed struggle the prospect of developing mass organisation and contact amongst the people is limited. To fight a people's war we need weapons, part of which we get from the enemy. But to get these weapons from the enemy we need weapons. To end the misery of domination and exploitation we fight a protracted war but inherent in the war is enormous sacrifice and suffering by the people.

The precise way in which FRELIMO resolved these contradictions was partly determined by the specifics of its own history and situation. But, broadly speaking, most of these problems are common to every revolutionary movement which, like ours, is forced by history to struggle for social change by a strategy which includes armed violence. The way in which FRELIMO successfully resolved these contradictions is not only an inspiration to those facing the same kind of odds which FRELIMO faced in 1962 but helps reinforce the guidelines of revolutionary struggle everywhere.

THE POLITICAL LINE

FRELIMO's 16-year history is not just the history of the armed battles it fought against the enemy nor of the way it perfected the organisational and technical apparatus to meet the demands of people's war. It is also the history of the forging of a political line. Revolutionary collectivism, revolutionary politics and revolutionary ideology were becoming more and more the touchstone of every department.

FRELIMO's official organ and the statements and resolutions of its congresses and various sessions of its Central Committee over the last decade show unmistakably the consistent maturing of its ideology. They show too how ideology was moulded in action and for action.

But here, as on the battlefield, the path was not always easy and many who were unable to progress with FRELIMO fell by the wayside. On FRELIMO's 10th anniversary its Central Committee declared:

"Today the Mozambican people have an active fighting organisation which has consolidated itself in the course of a rich and deeply lived political experience. Many stumbling blocks made our path difficult and many vital choices had to be made; but it was in the course of making such choices that we have found our strength and affirmed our purpose."

In the initial period the majority of the founding members of FRELIMO were psychologically unprepared for the armed struggle and most of them eventually deserted the organisation. (*Mozambique Revolution* April–June 1970, p. 8). Again, even amongst those who had no doubts about the necessity for taking up arms to destroy Portuguese colonialism, deep-seated differences emerged on the relationship of armed struggle to the overall revolutionary processes in Mozambique. Some members of FRELIMO saw the armed struggle as automatically capable of setting up a chain-reaction. They believed that the people would support it whether it was well organised or not. They were also convinced that the struggle would be a short one and the enemy could be defeated quickly and easily. This showed that they considered armed struggle to be:

". . . merely a technical and mechanical expedient. Such leaders, in effect, refused to consider armed struggle as a process of people's participation and as the fundamentally political undertaking which it is." (*Mozambique Revolution* April–June 72, p. 14).

An important corollary of this wrong position was that

"The army is merely an executive body assigned the task of liquidating as many enemy soldiers as possible but not concerning itself with politics."

One of the core problems in elaborating a strategy of struggle in any situation is a careful and correct definition of the enemy. Especially in a colonial type situation in which the oppressor comes mainly from the European white ethnic group, the people understandably tend to ident-

ify the oppressor and colonialism with every white man. In the case of Mozambique, FRELIMO was strongly opposed to such a generalisation. Over and over again it stressed that:

“FRELIMO’s popular and revolutionary line . . . defines the enemy not on the basis of race or national origin but rather on behaviour. From the very outset, FRELIMO has maintained that our enemies are not persons of white colour, or of Portuguese origin, or any other nationality, but all those persons, white or black, Mozambican nationals or foreigners, who are opposed to our ideals of freedom and total independence FRELIMO’s political line which advocates the total abolition of racism and tribalism, has been fully adopted and implemented in its entirety by the FRELIMO fighters.”
(Mozambique Revolution Oct.—Dec. 72).

This approach was one of the foundation stones of FRELIMO’s rejection of racialism and backward nationalism and enabled it to implant into the consciousness of FRELIMO cadres and the Mozambican people the vigorous and liberating ideas of revolutionary nationalism. The understandable feeling of bitterness against the white Portuguese as a group had to be “transformed into political awareness of the need to fight oppression, to direct our weapons against the system of oppression, not against mere skin colour.” *(Mozambique Revolution April—June 72, p. 13)*. Such an approach certainly did not weaken or blunt national consciousness. It helped stimulate a national awareness which served the interests of the nation as a whole and isolated those both inside and outside FRELIMO who demagogically attempted to abuse national sentiment for career and sectional purposes. Reporting on FRELIMO’s Central Committee meeting of May, 1970, *(Mozambique Revolution April—June 1970)* said:

“The enemy has two faces: the principal and direct enemy is Portuguese colonialism and imperialism, which are open enemies whom we confront daily in the battlefield, and in relation to whom no doubt, no confusion is possible. The other face is that of the indirect secondary enemy, who presents himself under the cover of a nationalist and even as a revolutionary, thus making it difficult to identify him. The Central Committee reaffirmed that the characterisation of the enemy for us will never be derived from colour, nationality, race or religion. On the other hand our enemy is that one who exploits or creates conditions for the exploitation of our people, whatever his colour, race, nationality or religion.”

And the enemy from within showed itself at different times and in different guises as FRELIMO's revolutionary commitment grew and as it was scoring more and more successes in its efforts to transform the liberation struggle into a democratic revolution. Attempts were made to destroy FRELIMO from within by a variety of methods including the assassination of FRELIMO's outstanding first president, Eduardo Mondlane, in February 1969.

The winning of liberated zones created conditions of a new type. FRELIMO had to organise the life of the population in these zones and this immediately posed choices concerning the goals of the struggle and the type of economic, political and social system to be established in the country. Freedom was no longer a blue-print for the future to which glib lip-service could be paid by all who claimed to be opponents of Portuguese colonialism; it posed concrete choices. The ideological contradictions which simmer underneath in every organisation in this type of situation, came to the surface and choices could no longer be hidden.

“How to structure the economy in the liberated zones? How to organise the school services, the hospitals? Should we cope with colonialist-capitalist model which had just been removed, or should we adopt a system based on the needs and will of the people? . . . Those who had come to the revolution to become wealthy, motivated by their personal interest, wanted the system to remain the same — which would just expel the colonialists, re-establish the structures created by the Portuguese, and take their place in positions of control. The revolutionary comrades took a diametrically opposed position. They knew that if this happened there was no justification for the struggle. Why fight if everything will continue as before? They wanted a completely different system where all the vestiges of colonialist and capitalist influence would be eliminated. They wanted a system that would really serve the interests of the people and which could never resemble, not even vaguely, the system of the exploiters and oppressors.”

By December 1972 the FRELIMO Central Committee reaffirmed that FRELIMO was a front which ensured the participation of all genuinely anti-colonialist forces. At the same time it made it crystal clear that this front has “as its point of departure the negation of the exploitation of man by man.” (*Mozambique Revolution* Oct.—Dec. 72, p. 2). FRELIMO totally rejected those within its ranks who saw the

taking of power as a means to continue to oppress and exploit the people, with the meaningless difference that all the negative functions of the colonial system would now be performed by black Mozambicans. Another tendency which FRELIMO fought uncompromisingly was the idea of establishing an elitist intellectual core who would be exempt from participating in the struggle and who would be "saved" until such time as they would be installed as leaders of a free Mozambique. These various anti-revolutionary and anti-popular tendencies were represented by people like Lazaro Kavandame, Mateus Gwenjere, Uriah Simango and a few other representative of internal reaction. They were an impure load such as every revolution carries, but which the Mozambique revolution discarded through the unbending vigilance of revolutionaries within FRELIMO against every form of reaction, and through their uncompromising fight for the victory of the revolutionary political line at every stage of the struggle. In the words of President Machel on the day independence was declared:

"This. . . struggle required a constant fight to clarify and develop FRELIMO's political line, especially as regards the definition of who is the enemy and the nature, methods and objectives of the fight. The successive dividing lines that were drawn within FRELIMO and the process of cleansing our contradictions which arose reflected antagonistic interests, the contradiction between the working masses and a handful of new exploiters who wanted to take the place of the colonial bourgeoisie as an exploiting class.

"This victory (the decisions of the historic Central Committee meetings held in April 1969 and May 1970) which led to the cleansing of our ranks and the deepening of FRELIMO's ideology, created the conditions for transforming the armed struggle into a people's war, for going over from a liberation struggle to the higher phase of a people's democratic revolution."

It is not really possible in a short treatment to do justice to the whole panorama of FRELIMO's growth in revolutionary practice and ideology in the decade which marked its victorious progress towards a free Mozambique. It is always tempting to attribute the speed and depth of its achievements to certain objective factors such as the undoubted advantage of a well situated friendly border from the inception of its struggle. No doubt these and other factors played some part in determining the rate of FRELIMO's progress, but without the subjective achievements the revolution could not have been

won. In this connection it is worth recapitulating some of the recommendations President Machel made in 1972 to FRELIMO's Centre for Military and Political Training (CPPM). They provide an inspiring clue to the political line whose universally valid ingredients became the vital instrument for Mozambique liberation. In brief summary they include the following:

The work of the CPPM is not to produce 'killers' but to train revolutionary fighters. What characterises the FRELIMO fighter is his political consciousness. We must learn to fight against the enemy lurking in our minds i.e. the capitalist ideology imposed by colonialism and the feudal ideology inherited from tradition. We must not treat men as automatons who must receive or carry out orders whether or not they understand them or have assimilated them. Leaders must fight against the harmful tendencies of solving problems through administrative decisions. The first battle is to instil national consciousness, stress the importance of unity and of wiping out tribalism. Class consciousness must be made more acute and deeply felt together with the need for close unity between the workers and peasants to win power. We must wipe out the spirit of individualism and foster the collective spirit. The militant must be instilled with a spirit of responsibility. He must feel that he is FRELIMO, that FRELIMO's fate depends on his behaviour. The fighter must distinguish friend from foe even if the latter is concealed under the same colour, language, family ties or tribal markings as their own, even if he raises his flag with us. This is essential if the barrel of our gun is always to be trained on the correct target.

The emancipation of women is one of FRELIMO's central tasks. There is a need to fight reactionary prejudices among both men and women about women's abilities and their role in the revolution, in society and in the home. The struggle of the peoples and workers of the world against exploitation of man and to build a new society is a decisive factor in creating favourable conditions for the victory of our struggle in the present era. The internationalist spirit is an essential characteristic of revolutionary forces. Study combined with practice is a fundamental weapon. In the final analysis the principal contradiction lies in whether it is to be a handful of exploiters, old or new, or the masses who are to control the means of life. Because the leaders personify FRELIMO's political line their behaviour, unity or disunity, their discipline or indiscipline, their hardworkingness or laziness, their collective spirit or selfishness, their revolutionary dedication or corruption; —whichever of these habits predominate will be interpreted as the reality of FRELIMO's line. Leadership is collective and responsibility is collective.

THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

Laying the Foundation for a Socialist Mozambique

Perhaps the most difficult period in the life of a revolution is the period immediately following the defeat of the direct enemy. Up to that moment the fight to smash the obvious and visible obstacle to the attainment of independence dominated the struggle and, in broad terms, determined the nature of the democratic alliance. Victory sets the scene for fresh battles to be fought if the people are to inherit the fruits of the new life for which they fought with great sacrifice. But, unless the seeds have already been sown during this period it may be too late to ensure that the process for which the struggle was started in the first place, is not stopped in its tracks. *Because it was conscious of this truth FRELIMO insisted that the kind of society which would be constructed when the enemy has been defeated should be defined long before the victory is achieved.* The easy way would have been to embrace equally all who paid lip service to nationalism without regard to their class and social tendencies. And because of FRELIMO's loyalty to the basic tenets of the science of revolutionary struggle President Machel was able to say on Independence Day:

“With the proclamation of the People's Republic of Mozambique we are starting a new phase of our history in which we are going to put into practice everywhere in the country the political, ideological, economic, social and cultural gains won during the struggle. To say People's Republic is not to voice an empty and demagogic formula. To say People's Republic means to give substance to the aspirations of millions of dominated Mozambicans for whom independence is a precondition for the end of exploitation and the establishment of a People's regime . . . To say the People's Republic is to say Revolution.”

The 3rd Congress of Frelimo has begun to chart the new path in this continuing Mozambican Revolution — the building of a People's Democracy in order to lay the economic, social and cultural foundations for the eventual construction of a Socialist State. The Central Committee report, the Programme, the Party Statutes and the Economic and Social Directives deserve close study.

Here, I wish to touch on a few aspects of these documents which make an important contribution to fundamental ideological problems facing the African revolution in general. FRELIMO emphasises that the answers to these problems will be found in the experiences of tradi-

tional revolutionary struggle and scientific socialism, by a strategy which is evolved from a synthesis of the specifics of a particular revolution and the general principles of Marxism – Leninism.

Implicit in FRELIMO's approach are certain basic postulates which have general validity. These are: that the construction of socialism presupposes the existence of a relatively advanced modern industrial base; that a new state must be won which will ensure social control of the means of production; that such a state cannot be won except in the struggle against internal and external forces whose class interests will impel them to resist the transformation; that such a struggle can only be successfully led by a revolutionary political vanguard guided by scientific socialism; and that none of these objects can be lastingly achieved without overcoming the dependence on the world capitalist economy.

THE TRANSITIONAL STAGE

FRELIMO's new programme recognises that before Mozambique can pass to the stage of Socialist revolution, the political, material, scientific and technical bases must be constructed. Thus amongst the main tasks of the present stage of the People's Democratic Revolution are: the liquidation of all forms of foreign domination, the elimination of the legacies of the traditional-feudal and colonial-capitalist societies, the extension and consolidation of democratic people's structures based on the objective interests of the broad labouring masses, the struggle on the production front to increasingly satisfy the people's basic needs, the strengthening of the power of the workers and peasantry and the further development of a new kind of state apparatus and state power, the ensuring of the country's defence capability and its internal security. The programme spells out the measures needed to give effect to these objectives in the political and ideological spheres and in the spheres of the economy, labour and social policy, health, education and culture, foreign policy, the State and national defence and public security.

A CLASS APPROACH

The construction of a new popular-democratic order (as a stage towards Socialism) demands a class approach. It calls for a clear definition of the role of each of the classes of Mozambican society, as well as

the mutual relations between the different classes. The Programme proceeds to state unambiguously that the working class, as the leading class of history, is alone 'capable of embracing the whole process of the transformation of nature and society and of promoting and guiding this process.' This involves working consistently for the strengthening of the political and social role of the working class and cementing its alliance with other revolutionary classes and groups, more especially the peasantry. The People's Democratic State is regarded as the embryo of a Socialist State and its dominant class basis is the 'Revolutionary — Democratic dictatorship of the Workers and Peasants.'

Of the peasantry, the programme records that it is the most numerous stratum of the population and is the principal force of Mozambican society. The working class in alliance with the peasantry constitute the leading force and the political basis of People's Democratic Power. The prime task in relation to the peasantry is to free them from the remains of traditional production and to encourage higher forms of productive and collective life.

The specific role of the other classes and groups in Mozambican society is also defined. Within the framework of a State dominated and controlled by the working class in alliance with the peasantry, there is room for other social forces. These include patriotic intellectuals who must be progressively freed from the spirit of elitism and dedicate themselves to the service of the people; artisans and small property owners who have an interest in struggling against the monopolies, side by side with the other labouring classes.

THE VANGUARD PARTY AND WORKERS' POWER

A distinction is made between the basic class foundation of the People's Democratic Order (workers in alliance with the peasantry) and the role of other classes and groups. This distinction is of vital importance during the transitional phase towards socialism. The doctor, teacher, engineer, bureaucrat, upper echelons of the army, small shopkeepers, small peasant proprietors, artists and other variants of the middle strata have a positive role to play, but according to FRELIMO, only if they serve and subordinate themselves to the ideology and interests of the working class and peasantry. FRELIMO's programme is based on the premise that socialism cannot be constructed without workers' power. State forms which set out to create conditions for the eventual con-

struction of a socialist order need to be dominated, at every level, by the working class and its main ally the peasantry, guided by the ideology of Marxism-Leninism.

In Africa, in the last 15 years, many sincere attempts to create transitional conditions for the construction of socialism have floundered precisely because no effective means were found to place real power in the hands of the working people led by a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist vanguard. Is there a basis for the creation of such a vanguard in countries like Mozambique and Angola? Is what they have done practical or relevant for other parts of independent Africa?

It has sometimes been argued that working class power and working class vanguards are not just the product of imaginative thinking; a precondition for both is the existence of a sizeable and stable proletariat, historically evolved by more or less advanced capitalist relations of production. And, it is added, Africa is in short supply of both these factors. Hence, the argument goes on, whilst the theory is unimpeachable, the real situation forces us to find alternative state forms which are nonetheless able to focus on the long term socialist option.

A full answer to these arguable propositions would need more space than the context of this article allows. But in summary, it can be said that:

- a. There are now only a few parts of independent Africa which cannot boast of a stable urban work force, part of which could be correctly described as a proletariat.
- b. A working class rarely, if ever, gives spontaneous birth (in the purely deterministic sense) to a revolutionary workers' party and its scientific ideology. A vanguard, representing the historic interests of an existing proletariat (however small) or one in the process of formation, is usually the creation of a few advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals.
- c. History has proved that such a party is able to gain the following of the broad labouring masses even when the proletariat itself is still small and weak. Viet-Nam is one of the more recent examples of this possibility in a situation in which the proletariat proper was proportionally no bigger than its counterparts in many parts of Africa. Now Mozambique and Angola reinforce the feasibility of such a perspective.

- d. The absence of an advanced technical and industrial base at the time when independence is attained is relevant to the complexity and length of the transitional phase towards socialism but is not an insuperable obstacle to the establishment of State political power based on the workers and peasantry. This is facilitated by the fact that in most cases the bourgeoisie is small and weak and usually begins to act as an instrument of neo-colonialism soon after independence.
- e. Indeed, without the emergence of a state based on the workers and peasantry, led by a vanguard party, there can be no effective and lasting construction of conditions which will pave the way for a socialist transformation during the transitional period. Put in another way, it is only a State with such a class foundation which can consistently lead the working people in the class battles (both internal and external) which become more intense in the post-liberation period.
- f. A key factor which compensated for the legacy of underdevelopment from the period of colonial rule, is the existence of a strong world socialist sector which has already shown a capacity to help defend liberated countries against direct or indirect interference, and makes possible a decreasing dependence on the world capitalist market and its previous monopoly of technical expertise.

(In general I want to emphasise that I am dealing with the post-colonial state. The problems of the role of the working class, as an organised entity, during the phase of the anti-colonial struggle, is a more complex problem which requires separate treatment.)

The emergence of independent states in post-war Africa is an important advance in the anti-colonial revolution. Even in those which have not yet moved effectively towards an order based on the political power of the working people, some steps have been taken to begin the construction of a national economy and they have played a positive role in anti-imperialist struggles. But in analysing the character of "progressive anti-imperialist" states (a shifting category covering a wide range of populist regimes), we must guard against overlooking the real internal class power relations. It is these relations which will ultimately determine both the consistency of anti-imperialist align-

ments and more especially, whether the commitment to a socialist future is merely rhetoric. Without the transfer of *political* power to the working class and its allies there is little chance to effectively transform the production relations and the whole society in the direction of a socialist order. And it is only a revolutionary vanguard of the working class which can effectively guide this process. These are two of the universal and necessary starting points of scientific socialism and they are implicit in the steps taken in Mozambique and Angola.

The Central Committee report to FRELIMO's 3rd Congress declares:

"The creation of the Party arises as a necessity for the development of the Revolution.

The new stage of the class struggle and the construction of the bases for the subsequent passage to socialism demands a new instrument: the vanguard party . . . without a revolutionary party which can lead the worker and peasant masses and other working people through all the phases of class struggle, through all the economic, political and ideological battles, *it is not possible to build socialism.*" (my emphasis);

The translation into practice of the aims which FRELIMO has set itself poses a number of complex questions. How to consolidate the controlling influence of the vanguard party (which of necessity will consist of a small proportion of the people) whilst avoiding elitist tendencies? How to ensure at the mass level the participation of the revolutionary classes, not merely as objects of mobilisation but as creative participants in the whole process? How the organs of popular power relate to the vanguard party, how they develop a life which does not conflict with FRELIMO's primacy as the controlling guide of the state and the whole society but which, at the same time, gives them a meaningful role in the governing apparatus?

These and many other equally fundamental questions will be answered by future revolutionary practice. The documents and decisions of the 3rd Congress provide only the broad guidelines. But the skill with which FRELIMO, in its relatively short life, has steered the course of the Mozambique revolution, gives cause for confidence that the aims of the present phase will be achieved.